

DR M'GILL

VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF HERESY,

AND THE

Erroneous Assertions of his Adversaries

BRIEFLY REFUTED,

BY REFERENCES TO

The Word of God, and the Confession of Faith,
Which are the only Standards of the Church of Scotland;

ALSO, BY REFERENCES TO

The Larger and Shorter Catechisms,
And other Authorities of approved Orthodoxy.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A FEW SUITABLE REMARKS.

BY

A FRIEND OF TRUTH.

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DR M'GILL vindicated.

CHAP. I.

Orthodox Sentiments of Dr M'Gill.

HAVING some time ago read a book intituled "A Practical Essay on the Death of JESUS CHRIST, &c. by DR M'GILL one of the Ministers in Ayr," we were surpris'd to find, that a clamour had been excited on account of dangerous and heretical opinions said to be contained in that book. This circumstance led us to examine it with more attention, and to compare some of the publications which have appeared in opposition to it, with the book itself. The result has been, that after an impartial investigation, we can discover nothing in that Essay contrary to the Sacred Scrip-

tures and the Confession of Faith. Nay, we are convinced, that it contains doctrines entirely opposite to those which the Doctor's adversaries have charged upon him. Take the following examples from the Essay itself; and it may be just necessary to warn the candid Reader, not to form his opinion from the brief hints which we may suggest, but from the authorities to which we refer.

1. The Doctor speaks of Christ's Divine nature, his Divine powers, his Divinity; and our help by him, as exalted, being the support of a God. He even speaks of what Christ gave up by becoming flesh,—of his being *the resurrection and the life*, &c.—Essay, pages 25, 40, 52, 65, 145, 306, 308, 412 and 413, 487, 528, 547.

2. He often speaks of the atonement, propitiation, and sacrifice of Christ,—of his taking away the guilt of sin, and dying in our stead, being our surety and expiatory victim.—Pages 230, 277, 279, 363, 367, 403, 420, 504, 351, 278.



3. Original Sin, or our corruption and guilt, we find expressed, or taken for granted, in pages 229, 239, 366, 443. Indeed the second part of his book is wholly founded upon the truth of this doctrine.

4. In the dispensation of grace, as in nature, God is the first mover. Pages 233, 249, 401.

5. Through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his unspotted righteousness, we receive the blessings of the new covenant from the hand of God. Pages 282, 283, 289.

6. In the name of Christ we pray to God ; and, through him, our religious services are accepted of God. P. 8, 281.

7. By nature, we are weak, and without strength ; but, through Christ, we obtain the spirit, and all the grace of the gospel, to help our infirmities. Pages 460, 461, 462, 463.

8. Our redemption thro' Jesus Christ is according to a plan previously formed and decreed in the mind of God. Pages 236, 241.

9. It was the decree and will of God, that Christ should be crucified, and that he should redeem the world by his sufferings and death. Pages 40 and 41, 145, 246.

10. Although those perfections which qualify our blessed Saviour for being King in Zion, and Judge of the world, viz. the divine power and wisdom which dwelt in him, and which were displayed during his ministry, were not conferred as the rewards of his obedience; yet his powers of office, or honours in his exalted state, are bestowed upon him by the Father, in reward to his perfect merit, his tried and approved fidelity through suffering. Pages 145, 297, 311, &c. &c.

11. The doctrine of grace, as displayed in the Gospel, is inconsistent with

with the doctrine of merit in us. Pages 251, 286, 301, 396, 398.

12. True Christians are the elect of God, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. Pages 321, 499, 310.

13. Dr M'Gill agrees with our Confession of Faith, in asserting, that Jesus, in his agony, suffered grievous torments immediately in his soul. Essay, from page 14. to 35. compared with Confession viii. 4. The Doctor calls it *the secret anguish of his soul*.

First, He does not indeed say, nor does the Confession affirm, that secret torments were inflicted upon the soul of Jesus, from *the hand of God*. We read of his having at all times the countenance and gracious presence of his Father. John xiv. 10, 11. and viii. 29. and xvi. 32. and xi. 42. Even in his agony, and on the cross, his Father's ear was open to his cry, and gracious support granted, suited to the necessity of his situation. Isa. l. 7.
Luke

Luke xxii. 43. Heb. v. 7. Nor was it unnatural for Jesus, in such situations, to repose his confidence in the divine presence and friendship. Psal. xxiii. 4. lxxxiv. 11. Isa. xliii. 2.

Secondly, The circumstances of distress which afflicted the Saviour's mind, condescended upon by the Doctor, in the order in which they are considered by the Rev. Mr R——, are the following :

1. He had at all times a deep concern of mind for his disciples, and for their proper behaviour in propagating, with firmness, his religion in the world, through sufferings ; and as much now as before. Mark xiv. 38. John xvii. 11. xviii. 8. See also Henry's Commentary on Matthew xxvi. 41. and on John xvii. 11.—
2. He was greatly affected with his foreknowledge of the ingratitude, guilt, and fate of Judas. John xiii. 21, compared with Mark xiv. 35, 41, 42. Larger Catechism, quest. 49. See Dr Doddridge on John xiii. 21.—
3. Another cause of his distress of mind, was the sense he had of the baseness, perverseness, and impending

pending doom of his countrymen the Jews. Luke xix, 41. xxiii. 29.—4. Might not Jesus have an anxiety of mind, arising in part from an apprehensiveness about the difficulty of maintaining a becoming temper and deportment under the trials that lay before him, that he might thereby glorify his Father who sent him? John xvii. 1. See Poole and Henry on the passage now cited.—5. Jesus now conflicted with the terrors of death. John xii. 27. This is the doctrine of our Larger Catechism, quest. 49. though arraigned by Mr R—— as Popish and Socinian: But can any one believe seriously, with Hilary Bishop of Poitiers, in his tenth book against the Arians, that Jesus Christ had no fear of danger, or sense of pain?—6. Might not his bodily frame, and state of his animal spirits for the time, after so much fatigue and watching, have some share in the distress which he now felt? Hence, in the Larger Catechism, quest. 48. it is said, ‘ That Christ conflicted with the infirmities of his flesh, whether com-

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'mon to the nature of man, or particu-
 'larly accompanying that his low con-
 'dition.' Heb. ii. 17. iv. 15. Isa. lii.
 13, 14. See Dr Doddridge on Matthew
 xxvi. 37.—7. Deep concern of mind he
 certainly had at the foresight of that
 fierce opposition which his religion was
 destined to meet with in the world, and
 the corruptions, divisions, strifes, enmi-
 ties and persecutions which were often
 to reign in the bosom of his church.
 Luke xii. 41. to 54. This cause of our
 Lord's agony Mr R—— prudently om-
 mits. Perhaps he was conscious that part
 of it was too applicable to his own con-
 duct, while engaged in sowing divisions,
 and 'beating his Master's servants,'—8.
 The Rev. Doctor asserts, 'That no doubt
 'Jesus experienced at this time, a dimi-
 'nution of the *sensible* consolations of his
 'Father's love, through the great pressure
 'of his griefs and fears.' We may add,
 that he certainly felt this upon the cross,
 Matth. xxvii. 46. when, for his consola-
 tion, he had recourse to a psalm of trust.

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This psalm the Jews were wont to repeat, in circumstances of deep distress. When Jesus had recourse to it, he was about to give up the ghost, and found himself unable to repeat more than the half of the first verse. He therefore summed up the whole by one short expression of reliance upon his Father's love: 'Father! into thy hands I commit my spirit.' It was therefore with propriety the Doctor added, 'Christ did not consider himself as suffering under the divine indignation, and was not *now* any more than at other times, the object of his Father's wrath.' John x. 17. In this opinion he is supported by the venerable Mr Henry, who affirms, in his comment on the agony, 'That there was now no despair or distrust of his Father, much less any conflict or struggle with him. The Father loved him, because he laid down his life for the sheep.' And on Matthew xxvii. 46. he observes, 'That on his mind there was no horror of God. He

‘ felt no impression of his Father’s dis-
 ‘ pleasure against himself, but against
 ‘ the sins of men.’

14. We find, that Mr R——, however
 much disposed to differ from the Rev.
 Doctor in other respects, yet in this
 point he feels himself occasionally con-
 strained to agree with him: For, when
 explaining Isaiah liii. 10. *It pleased the*
Lord to bruise him, he says, ‘ Not that he
 ‘ had pleasure in the act of bruising. To
 ‘ suppose this, would be impious in the
 ‘ last degree. But when he saw that
 ‘ hereby occasion would be given to the
 ‘ highest possible manifestation of the
 ‘ divine perfections, and to the redemp-
 ‘ tion of countless millions of lost men,
 ‘ it pleased Jehovah, the Father, in this
 ‘ view, to bruise his own Son. This
 ‘ demonstrates, that our Lord, at this
 ‘ time, was not the *object of his Father’s*
 ‘ *displeasure.* Indeed (adds he) sin im-
 ‘ puted to Christ, was the object of the
 ‘ divine indignation and wrath; but it
 ‘ by no means follows, that he who was
 ‘ holy,

'holy, &c. should be the object of his
 'whatb? Sermon, pages 37. and 38.
 Compare this quotation with Dr Mac-
 Gill's sentiments (Essay, page 245.), and
 if you find any difference, you must al-
 low it to lie in the expression, not in the
 sense. 'The torments of the cross were
 'a cup given him by his Father, in
 'drinking whereof he acted according
 'to his Father's will, and performed an
 'act of obedience to him. But his cross
 ' (says the Doctor) and all his sufferings
 ' were allotted to him, not for their own
 ' sake, (that is, page 242, not for the
 ' sake of the pain attending them), but
 ' for the sake of something else, in itself
 ' pleasing to God, who intended there-
 ' by to make him perfect, and, by his
 ' means, to bring many sons unto glo-
 ' ry.' Heb. ii. 10. and v. 9. 'Here
 ' then (Essay, page 449.) sin is exhibited
 ' to us in its most odious malignity. In
 ' the death of Christ, God shews that he
 ' hates sin more, if possible, than he
 ' loves his only Son, or than he pities
 ' his fallen and perishing offspring.—
 In

In these passages the Doctor obviously means, that the sins of men, not the Blessed Jesus, were the objects of the Divine wrath.

On comparing these quotations with those formerly adduced from Mr Henry, we find that this Author agrees with Dr M'Gill and Mr Ruffel (in this part of his sermon) in furnishing us with an easy explanation of the expression in the Shorter Catechism, ' That Christ, in ' his humiliation, bore the wrath of ' God.' That is, according to them, his obedience to the death being dear to God, as an unspotted sacrifice, bore off from us, or averted that wrath which flamed against the sins of men. Hence he is said to bear, and to put away our sins; that is, the punishment due to our sins. Isa. liii. 4. compared with Matth. viii. 17. See also Heb. ix. 28. You may naturally ask, what is the punishment due to sin? St Paul furnishes a proper answer, Rom. v. 12. 21. vi. 23, This punishment Christ bore in his body upon the cross. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

Thus,

Thus, in the passages just quoted, we can perceive no material difference between Dr M'Gill and his Kilmarnock antagonist, respecting the cause of Christ's sufferings. Their meaning seems to be, that God did not, in *wrath* against the Holy Jesus, inflict, or permit to be inflicted upon him, the death of the cross, merely to gratify his vengeance in the pain and ignominy attending it; but with a view, through the sufferings and death of his Son, to display his glory, and promote the great designs of his mercy towards guilty men; 'which could not have been, all circumstances considered, as well accomplished without them.' (Essay, page 242.)

15. If, *lastly*, we compare Dr M'Gill's sentiments concerning the atonement of Christ, with those of the Confession of Faith, we shall find them no way inconsistent: And neither of them give us any hint, that either in the garden, or upon the cross, he was under the Divine indignation; that is, an object of his
 Father's

Father's wrath. The only passage in the Confession directly in point, is to be found in chap. viii. 5. which runs thus:
 ' The Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect
 ' obedience, and sacrifice of himself,
 ' which he, through the Eternal Spirit,
 ' once offered up unto God, hath fully
 ' satisfied the justice of his Father, and
 ' purchased not only reconciliation, but
 ' an everlasting inheritance in the king-
 ' dom of heaven, for all those whom the
 ' Father hath given unto him.' In the
 Larger Catechism, quest. 44. what is
 here called the sacrifice of himself, of-
 fered up unto God, is explained by his
 ' offering himself a sacrifice *without spot*
 ' to God.'

Now let us hear Dr M'Gill, (Essay, pages 279, 296, 321.) ' The blood of
 ' Christ was precious enough to redeem
 ' us; because it was as the blood of a
 ' lamb without blemish and without spot.
 ' For he, having offered himself without
 ' spot unto God, hath obtained eternal
 ' redemption for us, or a complete, final,
 ' and everlasting atonement; assuring all
 ' men,

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' utmost assurance that they will come
 ' in due place and time. Hence the
 ' Apostle, with irresistible force of argu-
 ' ment, proceeds to demand, ' Who shall
 " lay any thing to the charge of God's
 " elect? It is God that justifieth; who is
 " he that condemneth? It is Christ that
 " died, yea rather that is risen again,
 " who is even at the right hand of God,
 " who also maketh intercession for us.'
 ' If the elect, or chosen people of God,
 ' his faithful servants who love him, and
 ' walk in the way of his commandments,
 ' are not condemned either by God or
 ' Christ, what power is there in the
 ' whole universe which they have rea-
 ' son to fear?'

From these facts, and many others
 which might be adduced, we are satisfied
 that the charge of Heresy, which has
 been thrown upon Dr M'Gill, is altoge-
 ther groundless. He often speaks of the
 Divinity of Christ, and clearly states the
 moving and meritorious causes in our
 redemption.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

*Erroneous assertions of Dr M'Gill's
Adversaries.*

THE most considerable of those writers who have appeared in opposition to Dr M'Gill, are the Kilmarnock champion, in his sermon already quoted, published 1787; and the Committee of Secession, in a pamphlet published at Falkirk. Although the first of these antagonists does not, as far as we remember, expressly mention the Doctor, yet every one considers his book as levelled at him. It is astonishing that this Gentleman should discover so much ignorance of the Formula which he has subscribed, as to introduce the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, (which we allow to be very valuable compositions), as of equal authority with the Confession of Faith, and equally binding upon the Clergy of our Church. It appears no less surprising, that the Committee of Secession, while they charge Dr M'Gill with heresy, never try

him by the Confession of Faith, but by a very different Standard of their own ; of which they not only adopt the ideas, but frequently the very language.

The author of these remarks is confident that his (the Doctor's) sentiments of religion are strictly conformable to the Confession of Faith ; which is the only standard, of human composition, to which the Church of Scotland can appeal in matters of heresy. But he is by no means inclined to give the Confession of Faith a greater degree of importance than it claims to itself. As the best summary of the Truths of the Gospel, with which he is acquainted, it engages his esteem ; but when men attempt to set it up in opposition to the word of God, and in matters of controversy pay greater deference to its decisions, than to the Sacred Scriptures, (from whence alone it derives its authority), he cannot help thinking that they are rushing headlong into the errors of the Church of Rome, from which they affect to keep at the greatest distance. That Church holds up
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the traditions of their fathers, and the decisions of councils, as equally binding upon the consciences of men with the Word of God; an error which our Confession condemns in the very first page. When, in opposition to this, we behold men, in a public instrument, where solemnity and deliberation are expected, introduce the Word of God as a notandum at the bottom of the page; it requires a very great effort of charity to prevent us from concluding that they esteem the Word of God as merely an addition or codicil to the Confession of Faith, and no way necessary to be referred to in a heresy process. Contrary to their practice, we take the Word of God as first in order, both in point of time and authority; and the Confession of Faith as a summary and abridgement of it, expressing the construction which our Church puts upon its doctrines, but having no authority unless what it derives from the Word of God, (without rejecting the lights exhibited in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms): and
from

from these we hope to make it appear, that the adversaries of Dr M'Gill, in their zeal to make him an heretic, have run themselves into several gross and dangerous errors. Take the following examples from the two publications already mentioned.

1. The *Kilmarnock Champion*, in his *Scheme of Wrath*, published 1787, page 23d, represents the Saviour in his agony, 'wading in the boundless and bottomless sea of his Father's wrath, which threatened entirely to swallow up his human nature;' and yet, forgetting his own doctrine, page 38, he maintains, 'That at this time he was not the object of his Father's wrath; but that sin, imputed to him, was the object of the divine indignation and wrath.'

2. The same *Champion* (*Scheme of Wrath*, page 34.) makes the whole value of Christ's sacrifice consist in his bearing punishment: while the *Confession of Faith* (chap. viii. 5.) places it, as we have seen,

seen, in the perfection of his obedience, as the meritorious cause in our redemption.

3. It is no less erroneous for the same writer (page 34.) to exhibit the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as all wrath and vengeance, and not disposed to be merciful, even to the elect, until Jesus Christ had born, or agreed to bear, the whole punishment which their sins deserved : For, though it is true that Jesus suffered for sinners, the just for the unjust, and even suffered in *their stead*, as Dr M'Gill expresses it, (page 420.) yet the extending mercy to the elect, and bestowing it through a Redeemer, were of God's mere good pleasure. John iii. 16. Eph. ii. 4. Tit. iii. 4. 1 John iv. 9, 10.—Conf. vii. 3. viii. 1. Larg. Catech. quest. 32. Short. Catech. quest. 20. Dr M'Gill, pages 401, 241, 249.

The Rev. Mr Moir of Tarbolton, tho' the spirit of his book seems to favour the wrathful scheme, appears to have stumbled

stumbled upon the same sentiment with the Doctor concerning the moving cause, when he says, as nearly as we can remember, ' That the grace of election ' was not the fruit of Christ's purchase ; ' but Christ, and all his offices, the fruit ' of electing grace.' Hence we conclude, that whatever Jesus, when executing the office of a priest, suffered in behalf of the elect, (the penitent, and returning), must be explained in perfect consistency with the mercy and free grace of God ; which was the first moving cause in their election to life eternal. But how this agrees with his being in wrath, and insisting upon his having his vengeance satiated, we are at a loss to comprehend ; nor does the Scripture, or Confession of Faith, give any hint of such a doctrine.

The Rev. Mr R—— therefore (Sermon from page 14. to 28.) seems to have fallen into a great absurdity, when, to complete the atonement, he represents the Father of mercies as entering into an alliance with the devil and his emissaries,
in

in order to afflict and torment the soul of the Holy Jesus in his agony. We are astonished to find the All-perfect Being classed in such company, and engaged in such employment. Such a description shocks both our reason and our feelings, and is expressly contrary to the whole tenor of the Scripture and Confession of Faith, i. John iv. 8, 12, 16. Matth. vii. 9, 10, 11. Luke xv. 10. Conf. viii. 1, 3.

4. The Falkirk Divines seem to be of opinion, that Adam, at his creation, was as perfect in wisdom and holiness as it was possible for him to be, and that there was no room for his further improvement by any future means. Contrary to Gen. iii.

5. They intimate, at the beginning of their book, that the doctrines of revelation are neither reasonable, nor intelligible; and they condescend upon four which they think so. This sentiment of theirs, however, seems contrary to the Confession of Faith, i. 7. unless they will

take upon them to say that these four doctrines are not necessary to be known and believed, in order to salvation.

6. They affirm, that all sins are equal, by saying that the smallest sin has an infinite evil in it. Contrary to the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, quest. 84. which affirms, ' That some sins are more heinous in the sight of God than others.'

7. They deny that God, by the gospel covenant, requires and accepts of repentance and sincere obedience ; and affirm, that if he did, it would be just a covenant of works, and not of grace. Contrary to Confession of Faith, xv. 3, 4, 5. xvi. 6. Shorter Catechism, quest. 85, 86, 87.

8. They deny that God hath put it in our power, by any assistance he bestows through Christ, to repent, believe, and sincerely obey the Gospel. Contrary to Matthew vii. 7,—11. Eph. vi. 10. Philip. iv. 13. John xv. 1,—5. Rev. iii. 20.

9. They seem to deny that our blessed Saviour (of whose divinity, divine nature, and divine powers, Dr M'Gill so often speaks) was the Chief of the Sons of God. Contrary to John i. 14, 18. and iii. 16, 18. and 1 John iv. 9. Coloss. i. 15,—19. Confession of Faith, viii. 1.

10. They deny that Christ came into the world to publish the law of God and a new covenant, and to reveal the terms of salvation. Contrary to Isaiah ii. 3. Matth. v. Heb. viii. from 7. to 13. Confession of Faith, viii. 1.

11. Because Christ, who came to save us, perfectly obeyed the law of God, they deny that a believer in him is bound to obey it, as necessary to acceptance through him. For such believer (say they) is dead both to the precept and penalty of the law. Contrary to Matthew v. 17,—19. Rom. iii. 31. John xv. 10. Heb. v. 8, 9. and x. 26. Confession of Faith, xix. 5.

12. They deny that Christ, in his agony, suffered through the infirmities of the flesh, and conflicted with the terrors of death. Contrary to Larger Catechism, quest. 48, 49. of which we have already quoted a passage, page 9.

13. They even affirm, that the Father carried it as an incensed judge towards his Son, while he was doing those things that pleased him. This assertion we hope is sufficiently refuted by the quotations and authorities referred to in page 11. of this vindication. See particularly John x. 17. and Mr Henry's Commentary on Isaiah liii. 10.

14. They maintain, that the intercessory prayers of the Saints, though accepted in Christ, are incompatible with that respect we owe to one Mediator, as our Advocate with the Father. Contrary to James v. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 1. Rom. x. 1.

15. Because Dr M'Gill, when speaking of the death and mediation of Christ as our hope, quotes Dr Whichcote and Mr Locke to support him in saying, ' That the Supreme Lawgiver determined from the beginning to mitigate ' in our favour the rigour of law,' they are highly offended, and charge him with denying the atonement of Christ, and saying that every one must stand upon his own bottom. Yet this quotation, which is so offensive in Dr M'Gill, is also expressly the doctrine of Marshall in his Treatise on Justification, inserted at the end of his Book on Sanctification, which the Founder of the Secession recommends as orthodox. Let us read Confession of Faith xvi. 6. and then say, if we can impute this unfair dealing to any other motive but that suggested in the Committee's Pamphlet, page 138. ' Withdraw from *them*, and associate with *us* the friends of truth. ' Strengthen our hands, and encourage ' our hearts.' That is, when literally explained,

plained, let us have more followers, and more money. 2 Pet. ii. 3, 14, 15.

16. They shew an inclination to dispute the propriety of contemplating Christ's death in the more important views stated by the Rev. Dr M'Gill and our Confession.

1. As completing his unspotted sacrifice.

2. As laying a foundation for his exaltation, and all the consequent powers and honours of it. 3. As the blood of the new

covenant, sealing and confirming the promises of God in Christ. The first they altogether omit, and hence seem to despise.

The two last they either explain away, ridicule, or shockingly pervert.

Contrary to Ephes. iv. 32. v. 2. Philip. ii.

8. 9. &c. Matth. xxvi. 27. 28. Heb. xiii. 20.

Conclusions

Conclusions from the Whole.

1. FROM the orthodoxy of the Rev. Doctor's principles, before stated and proved, it appears there is no reason to mourn over the condition of the Church of Scotland on his account, as dissenters affect to do.

2. No reason to bewail the unfaithfulness of the judicatories of our Church, in not sooner commencing a process against him; or in now opposing the violent attempts of a few fiery zealots, who have themselves, by their inflammatory sermons, been the instruments of raising the *Fama Clamosa*, upon which they wish to found a charge of Heresy. (See the advertisement from Ayr, added by way of Appendix.)

3. No reason to upbraid the more cool and temperate friends of orthodoxy with a culpable silence, for not stepping forth at this time to countenance these sons of contention.

4. Neither have dissenters reason to triumph in any new ground they have got for their secession, in the Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ.

But in order to guard against all danger from the groundless aspersions cast upon the worthy Doctor,

1. Let every one that can afford it, purchase his Essay, and read it with attention. A new edition of it, we hear, is lately published at London, and a high character given of it in the Appendix to the 66th volume of the Critical Review.

2. Let them compare its principles with the doctrines of the Bible and Confession of Faith, and they shall find the utmost reason to approve, adopt, and act upon them.

3.

3. Let them detest in their own hearts, and warn others of the unfair means which have been employed by the calumniators of the Rev. Doctor, with a view to hurt the cause of truth, and the success of the Ministers of the Church of Scotland.

4. Let them earnestly endeavour to feel the force of the true doctrine of Christ's mediation upon their hearts and lives; and they will be little disposed to indulge a censorious and unchristian spirit upon speculative points.

And that we may all shew ourselves hearty in the cause of our Master, let us be careful to observe the following directions:

1. Let parents be attentive to the education of their children, lest they be early led away by the error of the wicked, and seduced by the artifice and cunning
E craftiness

craftiness of those who live by deceiving the people.

2. Let us shew before the world our belief of the gospel, not satisfying ourselves with vain janglings, and disputes about matters of little consequence.

3. Let us not be ashamed of the true doctrine of the Gospel, nor afraid to stand forth in its defence, and in defence of those who faithfully maintain it, whatever aspersions may be cast upon us by the Gospel perverters of our times.

4. Let us bear our testimony against all such corrupt representations of Christianity as we find in the Popish writers, and which are adopted and defended by the opposers and persecutors of Dr MacGill.

5. Let us avoid the society of the interested and corrupt teachers, who employ themselves more in declaiming against

gainst those who are enemies to their conjectural divinity, than in preaching against sin and Satan, and supporting the cause of peace and holiness.

6. *Lastly*, To all our other endeavours, let us join our earnest prayers to the Father of mercies, through our Lord * Jesus Christ, that the preaching of the genuine doctrine of the Gospel may have free course, and be glorified; and that it may be the happy instrument, in his hand, of turning many from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive the remission of sin, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified, through faith that is in Christ.

* Our feelings were not a little hurt, to find that the Falkirk Polemics, in their concluding exhortation to their disciples, where they recommend prayer, make no mention of praying in the name of Jesus Christ.

May 20. 1789.

A P.



APPENDIX.

Ayr, April 29. 1789.

THE Magistrates and Council of the Burgh of Ayr, having observed a paragraph in the Edinburgh and Glasgow news-papers, giving an account of the proceedings of the late Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, mentioning among other things, an injunction from them to the Presbytery of Ayr, to enquire and report concerning a *fama clamosa*, asserted to be prevailing against the Rev. Dr William M'Gill minister of Ayr, on account of certain dangerous and erroneous doctrines said to be published by him :

In justice to truth and ministerial usefulness, we feel ourselves irresistibly called upon to bear this public testimony, That, so far as consists with our knowledge, all the respectable and well informed inhabitants of this town and parish consider themselves highly indebted to Dr M'Gill's publications, for the clear and useful lights therein thrown on many of the doctrines of our holy religion : that the whole parish

rish are gratefully sensible how unremitting his exertions have ever been, both by precept and example, in the cause of piety and virtue.

Had such a *fama* ever existed, it must have arisen among those who reside on the spot where that Gentleman's doctrines are delivered, and his writings were published; but before reading the proceedings of the Synod, no such *fama* was ever heard among us.

To decide upon theological controversies, or accurately to define the objects of an orthodox faith, lies neither within the limits of our ability, nor of our duty; but of this we are fully certain, that the long and successful ministry of Dr M'Gill in this place, has impressed our hearts with sentiments of esteem and reverence for his character, which nothing short of a very different line of conduct can ever efface, and which must ever determine us to afford him our most liberal encouragement and support.

Extracted from the Minutes of Council, by
DAVID LIMOND Town-Clerk.

